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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000392

SIPDIS

FOR CA/OCS/ACS/EAP; EAP/EX; EAP/BCLTV  
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC  
STATE PASS HHS  
USDA FOR FAS/PASS TO APHIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: VIETNAM - AVIAN FLU (AI) UPDATE #12

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CURRENT STATUS  
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1. (U) THE WHO INVESTIGATIVE TEAM REPORTS 19 CONFIRMED HUMAN CASES OF H5N1, OF WHICH 14 HAVE DIED. CASE AND FATALITY COUNTS HAVE NOT CHANGED SINCE TUESDAY 2/12/04.

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BUSINESS COMMUNITY CONCERNS  
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2. (U) ON FEBRUARY 11, 2004, THE HANOI AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HOSTED A LUNCHEON FORUM TO HELP ANSWER QUESTIONS ON AVIAN INFLUENZA POSED BY THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY. MARY KAMB, MD (CDC) AND BOB DIETZ, THE WHO SPOKESPERSON, GAVE PRESENTATIONS ABOUT WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT AVIAN INFLUENZA AND ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN VIETNAM. FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS REFLECTED THE CONCERN OF THE COMMUNITY AND RANGED FROM "HOW DO I PROTECT MY EMPLOYEES" TO "HOW LONG WILL THE OUTBREAK LAST" TO DISCUSSION OF THE MACRO- AND MICRO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE OUTBREAK. OTHER PARTICIPANTS ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION OF THE REPORT OF H5N1- POSITIVE NASAL SWABS OBTAINED FROM PIGS IN VIETNAM AND THE FOOT AND MOUTH OUTBREAK IN SOUTHERN PROVINCES. THE FORUM WAS ATTENDED BY AMERICAN BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES, PRIVATE AMERICANS, JOURNALISTS, AND INTERESTED PARTIES FROM OTHER EMBASSIES AND NGOS.

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ECONOMIC IMPACT  
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3. (U) The World Bank Vietnam released a preliminary assessment late last week on the potential economic consequences from the avian influenza epidemic. The report, noting that avian flu has primarily affected rural areas, cautioned that if the virus becomes transmissible from human to human, the economic consequences would be much higher. So far, avian influenza effects on international travel to Vietnam have been limited. The World Bank's assessment stressed that avoiding human-to-human transmission would be key to limiting economic and obvious human costs of the avian influenza epidemic.

4. (U) AS OF FEBRUARY 5, ACCORDING TO THE WORLD BANK, APPROXIMATELY 15 MILLION BIRDS HAVE BEEN CULLED, WITH A MARKET VALUE OF APPROXIMATELY USD3/CHICKEN. BY THIS MEASURE, THE BANK'S ROUGH ESTIMATE OF DIRECT ECONOMIC LOSSES IS AT LEAST USD45 MILLION. (NOTE: ACCORDING TO VIETNAMESE PRESS REPORTS, HOWEVER, THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT SAID THAT AS OF FEBRUARY 9, NEARLY 30 MILLION BIRDS HAVE BEEN CULLED. END NOTE). THE WORLD BANK PROJECTS THAT LOSSES COULD RANGE FROM JUST OVER 0.1 PERCENT TO NEARLY 1.0 PERCENT OF GDP DEPENDING ON THE SEVERITY AND EXTENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE AVIAN INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC. THE GREATER THE IMPACT ON TRAVEL AND TOURISM, THE GREATER THE LIKELY LOSSES TO GDP.

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STAFFING  
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5. (U) VISAS HAVE BEEN EXTENDED FOR 2 WEEKS FOR 3 U.S. CDC PERSONNEL CURRENTLY IN COUNTRY.

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CULLING AND ANIMAL SURVEILLANCE  
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6. (U) AT THE LUNCHEON OF THE HANOI AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE WHO SPOKESPERSON EXPLAINED THAT WHO BELIEVES THAT CULLING IN VIETNAM IS NOT GOING WELL; THAT THERE IS NOT A WELL-ORGANIZED, COUNTRYWIDE EFFORT TO KILL AFFECTED BIRDS; AND, THAT THE COUNTRY IS UNABLE TO SUSTAIN A LARGE SCALE CULLING RESPONSE.

7. (U) A VETERINARIAN ON THE WHO AVIAN FLU TEAM REPORTED THAT HE HAD OBSERVED A PROVINCIAL ANIMAL SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM IN A PROVINCE NEAR HANOI THAT COULD BE USED AS A MODEL FOR SURVEILLANCE IN OTHER PROVINCES. THE PROGRAM USED A BASIC SPREADSHEET PROGRAM AND TRACKED LOCATION OF INFECTED

FLOCKS ON A PAPER MAP. THE WHO TEAM MEMBER SUGGESTED THAT FUNDING COULD GO TO UPGRADING THIS PROGRAM TO USE DIGITAL MAPPING AS WELL AS PREPARING TRAINING MATERIAL TO EXTEND THE PROGRAM TO OTHER PROVINCES.

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ACTION PLAN FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
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18. (U) THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRESENTED A PRELIMINARY ACTION PLAN TO CONTROL AVIAN INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC TO THE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP, A GROUP OF DONORS AND CONSULTANTS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM AND THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE FOR BIRD FLU CONTROL. THE PLAN PRESENTED IN OUTLINE FORM INCLUDED EMERGENT TO LONG-TERM GOALS, INCLUDING IMPROVEMENT OF LABORATORY DIAGNOSTIC CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY, DISEASE CONTROL (INCLUDING CULLING AND DISINFECTION), MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS, TRAINING IN RECOGNITION AND CONTROL OF AI, IMPROVEMENT OF SURVEILLANCE AND REPORTING PROGRAMS AND POULTRY PRODUCTION PRACTICES AND FACILITIES. ANOTHER PRIORITY AREA IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPENSATION PROGRAM.

19. (U) THE PLAN ALSO OUTLINED RESOURCE NEEDS AS FOLLOWS:  
- PERSONNEL ARE NEEDED TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE TO INCLUDE FULL-TIME NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS - VETERINARIANS, EPIDEMIOLOGISTS, IT SPECIALISTS, LOGISTICS SPECIALISTS, EXTERNAL RELATIONS, ACCOUNTANTS, INTERPRETERS AND OTHERS.  
- FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS ARE EXPECTED TO EXCEED SEVERAL MILLION US DOLLARS FOR THE EMERGENCY AND MID-TERM GOALS. MENTION WAS ALSO MADE OF THE NEED FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO COMPENSATE FARMERS.

110. (U) NO SUCH PLAN HAS BEEN PRESENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.  
BURGHARDT